

Message Text

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TO USDEL SECRETARY PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 110161 TOSEC 110823

NODIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT BEIRUT 4055 ACTION SECSTATE 06 MAY

QUOTE

S E C R E T BEIRUT 4055

NODIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM BROWN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH CHRISTIAN LEADERS

1. FOLLOWING MY MEETING WITH PRESIDENT FRANGIE ON MAY 6TH I HAD A GENERAL MEETING WITH CHRISTIAN LEADERS, WHEN FRANGIE WAS JOINED BY CHAMOUN, GEMAYEL AND FATHER KASSIS. I WENT OVER THE SAME GROUND JUST COVERED WITH FRANGIE AND AGAIN ELICITED GENERAL DISSATISFACTION THAT WE HAD NO SPECIFIC PLAN AND WERE ALLEGEDLY BLOCKING SYRIA FROM PROVIDING THE SECURITY NEEDED FOR THE COUNTRY'S CONTINUED EXISTENCE.

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2. CHAMOUN BEGAN THE DISCUSSION BY NOTING THAT LEBANESE

DIFFICULTIES COULD BE ATTRIBUTED MAINLY TO THE PALESTINIANS. HE WAS PLEASED THAT I HAD CONCEDED THAT THE PALESTINIAN PRESENCE HAD CONTRIBUTED TO THE LOCAL DIFFICULTIES. THE CHRISTIANS IN LEBANON HAD BEEN ATTACKED. THEIR VERY EXISTENCE HAD BEEN THREATENED. THEY WERE PREPARED TO FIGHT ON IF NECESSARY. THE COMMUNISTS HAVE BEEN FISHING IN TROUBLED WATERS AND HAD AGGRAVATED THE SITUATION. OTHER COUNTRIES HAD BEEN THREATENED AND THE UNITED NATIONS INTERVENED. IT WAS INEXCUSABLE THAT THE UNITED NATIONS NOT INTERVENE IN THE PRESENT SITUATION IN LEBANON. LEBANON WAS GOING UP IN FLAMES WHILE THE WESTERN CIVILIZED WORLD WAS SITTING ON ITS HANDS. THERE WOULD BE NO SOLUTION IN LEBANON UNTIL A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT WAS REACHED. THIS WAS DELAYED NOT ONLY BY THE ELECTIONS IN THE UNITED STATES BUT ALSO BY THE ISRAELI ELECTIONS THE FOLLOWING YEAR. INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH, ALTHOUGH CHAMOUN STRESSED THE NECESSITY OF GETTING THE UNITED NATIONS INTO THE ACT, HE LATER REMARKED THAT NO LEBANESE PRIME MINISTER (ALWAYS A MOSLEM) WOULD ASK THE UNITED NATIONS TO INTERVENE.

3. PIERRE GEYMAYEL THEN EXPRESSED HIS GRAVE DISCOURAGEMENT. HE TOO SAW CONSIDERABLE COMMUNIST ACTIVITY IN LEBANON AIMED AT DESTROYING THE COUNTRY. ON THE OTHER HAND, MOST OF THE PROBLEMS COULD BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE PALESTINIANS. HE DID NOT WISH TO LECTURE THE WESTERN COUNTRIES BUT HE WANTED TO POINT OUT THAT SECURITY IN LEBANON WAS THE MAJOR ISSUE. WITHOUT SECURITY THERE WAS NO POINT IN DISCUSSING RECONSTRUCTION. ATTEMPTS HAD BEEN MADE TO INTEREST THE UNITED NATIONS IN LEBANON BUT THESE WERE UNSUCCESSFUL. SYRIA, HOWEVER, WAS PREPARED TO PROVIDE THE SECURITY THAT THE UNITED NATIONS WAS UNABLE TO PROVIDE. FOR TWENTY YEARS HIS PARTY HAD BEEN ACTIVELY OPPOSED TO SYRIA. HE WAS NOW CONVINCED OF SYRIAN GOOD INTENTIONS. IN ANY EVENT, LEBANON HAD NO ONE ELSE TO TURN TO SO THEY HAD TO COUNT ON THE SYRIANS AND WERE PREPARED TO DO SO. UNFORTUNATELY, THE UNITED STATES, WHILE NOT IN A POSITION TO PROVIDE DIRECT ASSISTANCE IN THE SECURITY

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FIELD, WAS ALSO PREVENTING SYRIA FROM DOING SO. HE APPEALED TO THE UNITED STATES TO GIVE THE GREEN LIGHT TO SYRIA. REFERRING TO THE PRESENT DELAYS IN THE ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT, GEMAYEL RECALLED THAT HE HAD STRONGLY URGED PRESIDENT FRANGIE NOT TO CONTRIBUTE TO DELAYS AND TO SIGN THE AMENDMENT ALLOWING FOR NEW PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS. IN LIGHT OF WHAT HAD TRANSPIRED SINCE THEN HE FELT ASHAMED.

4. FATHER KASSIS THEN MADE COMMENTS OF HIS OWN. STARTING OUT BY NOTING THAT HE WAS SPEAKING IN THE NAME OF THE CHURCH, HE SAID THAT ONE HAD TO LIVE BEFORE ONE COULD PHILOSOPHIZE. HE THOUGHT THAT LEBANON HAD PERHAPS CHOSEN THE WRONG FRIENDS. IT WAS PREFERABLE TO BE A LIVE COMMUNIST THAN A DEAD DEMOCRAT. THE SOVIET UNION HAD COME TO THE AID OF THOSE WHO SOUGHT ITS HELP IN ANGOLA. PERHAPS THE TIME HAD COME FOR THE LEBANESE CHRISTIANS TO SEEK THE AID OF THE SOVIET UNION AND BECOME A COMMUNIST STATE. INDEED, LEBANON COULD NOT ONLY BECOME A COMMUNIST STATE, BUT IT COULD ALSO HELP SPREAD SOVIET DOCTRINE IN THE AREA. KASSIS' STATEMENT WAS SO STRONG THAT EVEN PRESIDENT FRANGIE INTERVENED TO SAY THAT HE DID NOT SHARE THESE VIEWS. ON THE OTHER HAND, KASSIS, WHETHER WANTING TO EXPRESS HIS GENUINE FEELINGS OR MERELY DESIRING TO GET BACK INTO THE GOOD GRACES OF HIS AUDIENCE, REMARKED THAT HE HAD IN MIND SEEKING SOVIET ASSISTANCE IN THE SAME WAY THE EGYPTIANS HAD SOUGHT IT. ONCE ORDER WAS RESTORED, LEBANON COULD THROW THE SOVIETS OUT IN THE SAME WAY THAT THE EGYPTIANS HAD DONE SO.

5. AT THE END OF THE MEETING LUCIEN DAHDAH TRIED TO MAKE SOME SUMMARIES. AS HE SAW THE SITUATION, THREE ALTERNATIVES WERE POSSIBLE. THE FIRST ALTERNATIVE INVOLVED SOME SORT OF SYRIAN-U.S. AGREEMENT. THIS COULD BE FOLLOWED BY A U.S.-USSR AGREEMENT GUARANTEEING THE EXISTENCE OF THE PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON UNTIL IT WAS POSSIBLE FOR THEM TO HAVE A STATE OF THEIR OWN, WHICH EACH FAVORED. A FOUR COUNTRY CONSORTIUM COULD BE PUT TOGETHER TO ASSURE THE RECONSTRUCTION OF LEBANON. THE SECOND ALTERNATIVE WOULD INVOLVE A
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SITUATION WHERE LEBANON WOULD HAVE TO GO IT ON ITS OWN WITH THE MINIMUM AMOUNT OF OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE. THIS WOULD INVOLVE ELECTING A PRESIDENT AND TRYING TO PROVIDING SUFFICIENT SECURITY FOR A GOVERNMENT TO BE FORMED AND THE COUNTRY TO GET BACK ON THE ROAD TO RESTORATION. THE THIRD ALTERNATIVE WOULD BE PARTITION.

6. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT, WHILE I HAD MADE ARRANGEMENTS TO SPEAK TO EACH OF THE PRINCIPAL CHRISTIAN LEADERS SEPARATELY, THESE ARRANGEMENTS WERE IGNORED, SO THAT I ENDED UP SPEAKING TO THE GROUP TOGETHER. THIS WAS PROBABLY AS A RESULT OF A LITTLE SKULLDUGGERY ON THE PART OF LUCIEN DAHDAH. IN COLLABORATION WITH FRANGIE. I DID HAVE A PARTICULAR MESSAGE TO DELIVER TO PIERRE GEMAYEL ON DIALOGUE

AND WAS AT LEAST ABLE TO DO THAT AS THE RESULT
OF A MINUTE OR TWO WITH GEMAYEL ALONE AFTER THE
MEETING (SEE SEPTEL.)
BROWN UNQUOTE SISCO

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